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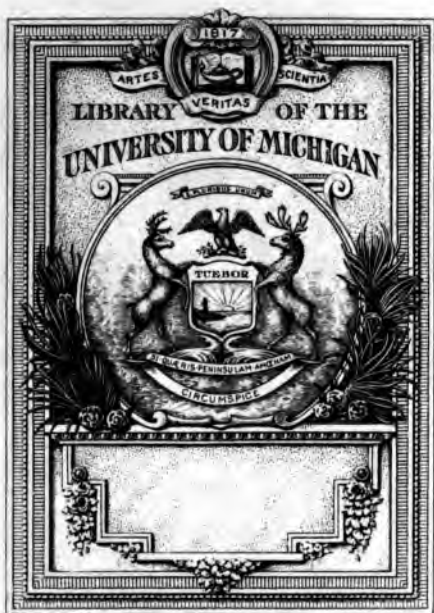
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GUY'S CLIFFE, KENILWORTH CASTLE,
LEAMINGTON, COVENTRY,
STONELEIGH, STRATFORD-ON-AVON, &c.,

BY
FRANCIS BEDFORD.

PUBLISHED BY
HENRY T. COOKE AND SON,
9, HIGH STREET, WARWICK.



APRIL, 1878.

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OF
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P R E F A C E .



This book bears the title of a small work issued by the late F. W. FAIRHOLT in 1845, and re-published in 1847 and 1862, without material change. The letter-press has now been entirely re-written under the new impression of SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE, which Knight, Halliwell, Dyce, Collier, Staunton, &c., have done so much to originate and popularize. The aim of the whole work is to put the visitor to "The Home of Shakespeare" in the right frame of spirit, to look with a love-informed eye and a sympathetic mind on the scenes and places connected with and consecrated by the master-mind who has made England nobler and worthier by his life and thoughts. The wood-cuts of the original work, as they are of perennial interest, and have the suffrages of critics, for their accuracy and excellence have been retained and re-published as the productions of one who delighted in his own special way to contribute to the honour of

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THE HOME OF SHAKESPEARE.



"The best in this kind are but Shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them."—*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, v. i.

"THE HOME OF SHAKESPEARE!"—at once his birth-place and his burial place—is Stratford-upon-Avon. In that very ancient borough, in the hundred of Barlichway, situated in the north-west border of Warwick, "that *Shire* which we the heart of England may well call"—it is certain that WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born. In it his boyhood was spent, his education was received, his youth was passed, his marriage was consummated, his children were born and brought up ; and to it, when fame and fortune had become his, he retired, in the property he had purchased by the earnings of his genius and industry, in the quiet competence he had achieved by toil and struggle, to mature his spirit and ripen for the sickle of "the

bribeless harvester"—Death. Here, too, he died, and in the chancel of the Church of the Holy Trinity his sepulchre is still to be seen. He is the bearer of "the greatest name in our literature, in all literature ;" and hence—

" His Birthplace came to be famous
And the grave where his bones were laid ;
And to Stratford, the ancient borough
Nations their pilgrimage made." *

" A sweet English village," says Mrs. Mary Cowden Clarke, " is this Stratford ! Seated on the edge of a silvery river, green with turfy banks and woody slopes, picturesque with cottage houses and cottage gardens ; crowned with a village church, ivy-clad, surrounded by moss-grown graves, approached by a lime-tree avenue, and its slender spire tapering towards heaven."

The scenery of Stratford and its neighbourhood is not, strictly speaking, romantic, but here and there it is eminently beautiful, and almost everywhere it is pleasant, not only in itself, but also in its associations. Of the fine open valley on the left bank of the Avon it forms a central attraction. We look upon the river flowing windingly through the fertile meadows of the dale, with singular complacency, and this is heightened into delight as the eye takes in the upland ranges, the tree-mottled heights, and the pretty pastoral villages which engird it. Though now, for the most part, a neatly built modern-looking township, the traditions and associations of the place have quite properly given a sort of Elizabethan, we had almost said Shakespearean, touch to its recent progress and improvement. It carries on, indeed, some trade in corn, malt, ales, &c. ; but it is not on account of its manufactures or commerce that Stratford is annually the resort of thousands of enthusiastic pilgrim spirits—it is because, of this England of ours, the noblest product of it, " priceless Shakespeare " was born, lived and died in it.

* " Romances and Minor Poems," by Henry G. Bell.

Every one whose intellect is imbued with the influences of the works of any distinguished writer—more particularly those whose minds have been brought under the conquering spell of the highest sort of authors, cannot but feel admiration, gratitude and love towards those peerless ones who have brightened and heightened their natures. If true of any, this must be especially true of Shakespeare, who is without a parallel among those who have cultivated the creative imagination. "We delight that he is human, that we may love him ; and as he is human, we indulge a human affection. Anything, however remote, that can bring us into contact, gratifies this affection, even though the intermediate agent be a little miserable tenement, a coarse flooring, a mere plaster wall. We are by these means sensuously informed of his actuality, and seem able to expand in affection." Elsewhere, especially when reading his potent dramas, and reflecting on the scanty, casual, and unsatisfactory sources from which his biography must be culled, we may be almost inclined to think Shakespeare a *myth* ; in Stratford he becomes a human personality, with "hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions ;" "fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter"—as the common run of mortals, though having an intellect "of imagination all compact" as a "living salient spring of action" within him, nobler than most.

Stratford-upon-Avon is a place of considerable antiquity. It is mentioned three centuries before the Conquest, in a Charter of Egwin, Bishop of Worcester (who died about 718). The Prelates of Worcester had a Palace at Stratford, and its ecclesiastical foundations were numerous. As these Church possessions were often centres of civilization and prosperity, it is probable that the town owed its early municipal government to its feudal superiors, the bishops. Here these spiritual

dignitaries held a temporal Court Leet twice a year, and here they permitted markets and fairs. In the third year of Edward VI. (1550) John Dudley, Earl of Warwick (afterwards Duke of Northumberland), compelled John Heath, then Bishop of Worcester, to surrender the superiority of Stratford to him. On his attainder it lapsed to the Crown. In the seventh year of Edward VI. a Charter of Incorporation was granted to Stratford-upon-Avon, placing the town (which contained about 1,500 inhabitants) under the magistracy of fourteen aldermen, one of whom was to be annually elected as bailiff, who was empowered to hold a Court of Record every fortnight for the trial of causes of debt or damage amounting to less than £30. Besides having rule over the lieges, these were to choose fourteen burgesses to keep the bridge and roads in repair, to maintain decayed inhabitants in almshouses, and to pay £20 per annum, each, to the Vicar and the Schoolmaster of the Parish.

For these purposes they were endowed with the revenues of the dissolved Guild of the Holy Cross, and with the tithes of the lands which had belonged to that fraternity, whose College or Chantry—served by four priests—had been founded by John de Stratford in the reign of Edward I. but had shared the fate of similar brotherhoods, under Henry VIII.'s act for the suppression of religious houses, 1536.

About twenty years afterwards—when Stratford was a rural town, surrounded by common fields and containing a mixed population of agriculturalists and craftsmen—that circumstance happened which made possible the loving interest of untold generations in all lands for Stratford-upon-Avon, viz., the marriage in 1557 (or thereabouts) of John Shakespeare, woolcomber, of Henley Street, with Mary, “youngest daughter of Robert Arden, of Wylmecote, in the parrysche of Aston Cauntlowe,” whose eldest son—born 1564—became Lord Paramount in *English literature*, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

The face of nature—its flowing river, green pastures, shady nooks and billowy eminences—cannot have been much altered, even in the course of the three centuries which have elapsed since Shakespeare, in his boyhood and youth, strolled through some of these scenes, and gained from them those early ideas of rustic life and rural imagery by which "Our Warwickshire" is

"With more spirit dignified
Than all our English Counties are beside."

On the old road to Warwick, which was then overhung by the wooded hills of Welcombe, about a mile and a half out of Stratford, lay the meadows of Ingon, of which Shakespeare's father held the lease, amid whose pleasant undulations, pretty dells and landscape-showing downs, William Shakespeare ran about as "a boy pursuing summer butterflies," where and when

"The daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady smocks all silver-white ;
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

Over the ridge and down in the hollow about four miles from Stratford, the old village of Snitterfield, with its antique Jews and its time-touched church comes into view. Here there is many

A bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
With sweet musk roses and with eglantine.

And we are in the midst of property which belonged to Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, and amidst fields which the poet's grandfather tilled, and where, consequently, we may well believe, Shakespeare rambled on school-holidays, and when the season came would not grudge to aid in the haymaking, lead the corn during the harvest time, or engaged in some of the other simple processes of farming life and pastoral husbandry.

The soft-flowing Avon—though it now brings memories of Naseby's fight (14th June, 1645) from its source in the western

slope of a hill in the border of Northamptonshire—still winds its lily-cumbered waters round its willowy banks, and sweeps in placid breadth under the lofty elms which adorn and guard the grand old church in which, beside his nearest and dearest, the precious dust and unstirred bones of England's Dramatist, William Shakespeare, gentleman, are "sepulchred." Here and there, but growing scantier now, we have houses on which his eyes must have rested, and we may pass along the fair green fields and hedge-rowed lanes through which he must have rambled. The house of his birth, the school in which he was taught, the cottage to which "he would a wooing go," the meadows on which his flocks grazed, the cropped lands from which he drew his tithe-rents, the church in which he went to the "morning's holy office" and worshipped as one who knew that—

"Words, without thoughts, never to Heaven go."

all these are here, to heighten our interest and gratify our associations. "It is by Shakespeare that England takes rank in the world of Literature; for it is in him that we have given to mankind a new type of genius—something that cannot be paralleled, something that cannot be replaced," and it is by Shakespeare that Stratford has become a centre for the curiosity and love of all who love high thoughts nobly expressed, and admire the creative might of the imagination.

"'Tis true; 'tis pity; pity 'tis, 'tis true"

that we cannot now look upon New Place, which the Poet—under the inspiration of genius and prudence—purchased, at an early age, as a home when he should retire from his busy London life; where he passed the calm years of his middle age; where he conferred the hospitalities of his time on his co-mates and companions; where he composed several of his most matured and original dramas; and in which, from his *frail tenement of clay*, with due "ripeness" and "readiness" he at

last breathed forth his immortal Spirit, "hoping and assuredlie beleaving," as his Will declares, "through the onlie merites of Jesus Christe, my Saviour, to be made partaker of lyfe everlastinge." But still we have the site of his great house, and we possess the garden in which his favourite flowers were reared, and in the arbourage of which he arranged his "thick coming fancies." All these places connected with the personal history of the poet lie closely together, so closely that a day at Stratford affords opportunity enough for seeing all that is extant of Shakespearean interest in the town; though a few days may be delightfully spent in visiting the tradition-haunted scenery of the vicinity. As we presume that our reader's interest in Stratford is, like our own, chiefly excited by its poet's home and associations, we shall take a survey of Stratford and its neighbourhood, describing what exists, sometimes noting what has passed away, under the prevailing poet's influence, and with the feeling that—

"Fairer seems the ancient borough,
And its sunshine seems more fair;
That he once has trode its pavement,
That *he* once has breathed its air."

The first place, of course, to which one's feet naturally tend on entering Stratford is

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE,

(of which a view, as it appears at present, forms the frontispiece to this brochure). This we reach from the railway station, which lies to the westward of the town, by proceeding east, crossing Rother Street, passing along Wood Street, till we reach the market house, turning round which, to the left, we enter Henley Street, where, about half-way up, on the right hand side, the birthplace stands. If we start from Warwick, from which Stratford is about eight miles distant, we enter the town by the bridge over the Avon, whence passing through Bridge Street, we reach

the market house, and go as before into Henley Street. This now a rather common-place looking street, of straggling, irregularly built houses, in which, conspicuous in its isolated and unframed antiqueness, stands this tenement, which rises in interest over the palaces of kings, from having been the birthplace of that—

“Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame.”

It is now but a fragment of the original building purchased by John Shakespeare, the poet's father, for £40, from Edmund Hall (after an occupancy of twenty-three years) in 1574, which then consisted of “two messuages, two gardens, two orchards with their appurtenances,” and was a fit residence for one of the thriving aldermen of the borough. The original features of



Shakespeare's Birthplace, 1769.

this building may be seen in the view of date 1769. It was a large house, the timbers of which were of substantial oak, and the walls filled in with plaster. Its dormer windows and gables, a deep porch, the projecting parlour, and bay window, all contribute to make it picturesque. In 1792 the dormer window and gable had been removed, the bay window had been transformed into an ordinary lattice window of four lights, the porch

in front had been taken away, and it was fitted up as a butcher's shop in the one division, and was occupied as a "public" hostelry in the other. This latter portion was in 1820, "improved" by having a new red brick casing, in the usual monotonous set-square style of common houses in small towns, constructed in place of the timber-framed frontage. The former part ceasing to be used as a pork-butcher's, was set apart for exhibition, and falling into decay, was justly described, by Washington Irving, as "a small mean-looking edifice." Its walls were whitewashed, and its beams bedaubed with lamp-black, a single rickety casement on the upper story had a flower-pot on the sill, and modern squares of glass had superseded the old leaded diamond panes, while a sign-board, projecting from the front, told that "the immortal Shakespeare was born in this house" (as is seen in view dated 1847). It has since been completely and carefully restored by Mr. Edward Gibbs, under the superintendence of the Birthplace Committee. The greatest nicety has been exercised in the preservation of the various details, and scrupulous care has been taken in the reconstruction to settle the accuracy of these details, by indications supplied in the original structure, and the restoration is regarded as "the most careful and successful work of the kind ever accomplished."

The timbers of the frame-work have been restored as in the early building, the mortices in the great beam, which extends along the frontage, having been taken as affording guidance, and even the original peg-holes have been used in the mortising. The central window is the genuine old one, and it has been made the model for the others. The pent-house and the dormer windows have been replaced; and while the interior has been strictly preserved in its original state, the exterior has been brought into its old Elizabethan form according to the judicious plan of the Curators, who—since (mainly through the zeal and energy of Mr. J. O. Halliwell) it was purchased for the nation—

have sedulously devoted themselves to restore it to its original state in Shakespeare's time, and have diligently applied themselves to devise means for its preservation.

As some modern doubts have been cast on the truthfulness of the tradition which asserts that this house in Henley Street was the birthplace of the poet, it may be as well to put on record a condensed history of the tenement from the settlement of John Shakespeare, in Stratford-upon-Avon, till the present time, that the value of the modern doubt as opposed to the ancient tradition, supported as it is by evidence not known so early as the legendary statements—may be estimated by the reader, and he may resolve himself of the question—is this really the house in which Shakespeare was born?

John Shakespeare, the son of a substantial farmer in Snitterfield, came to reside as a tradesman in Stratford-upon-Avon about 1551. He was the occupant of a house in Henley Street, 29th April, 1552, and in 1556 he is not only described as a glover, but is found pursuing Henry Field for illegally detaining 18 qrs. of barley. He seems, in reality, to have been a woolstapler, and to have carried on the various occupations of flockmaster, butcher, tanner, grazier, woodman, &c. He bought, in 1556—apparently as investments, with a view to his marriage, two copyholds—one tenement with garden and croft, &c., in Greenhill Street, and one house with garden adjoining it in Henley Street. It does not appear that he ever resided in the latter of these houses. The house in which he dwelt, probably during his whole life in Stratford, was that to which we have just been directing the reader's attention. In legal documents, of dates 1591 and 1597, we get proof incidentally of where these houses were situated, and that John Shakespeare dwelt in one of them. These tenements he occupied till his death in 1601, and, as he died intestate, they descended to his eldest son, William, as heir-at-law. One of these tenements is that

known and shown as *Shakespeare's Birthplace*, and which, in reverence of the mighty Poet who drew the first breath of life within its narrow bounds, the British Nation, in 1848, purchased and now preserves to be the resort of "pilgrims of all nations for centuries to come."

"Time has gently laid his withering hands
On one frail house—the House of Shakespere stands;
Centuries are gone, fallen are 'the cloud-capt towers,'
But Shakespere's Home, his boyhood's home is ours."

"It has been said"—we quote the words of Douglas Jerrold—"that no legal proof exists of Shakespeare being born in this house; but of what that many venerate is there legal proof? It is indisputable that his father possessed this house in 1552, that William Shakespeare was born in 1564, and that in 1575 it was still in the possession of his father." "Let not our poetic sympathies be measured by the argument of legality. It suffices to know and to feel that the spot was trode by Shakespeare, that 'here he prattled poesy in his nurse's arms;' and more than this, that the associations remain and have not been destroyed. The worldly wise will tell us sympathies such as these are visionary, that our interest has arisen solely from our own imaginations, or they will cast the purest relic of the poet on one side, because, truly, it does not now appear as in his days. To descend to this destroys whatever that is good and noble it is in the power of association to bestow, for eyes will daily glisten at memorials far more changed from what they were, far less like the great originals. Breathe not a whisper to dissipate the solemn thoughts of such a power—tell us not how changeable are the records of men. If there be one spot in old, in historic England, sanctified by past associations, it is the cottage where the poet of the world passed his youth, where he wooed and won, and encountered the struggles of early life—the birthplace of William Shakespeare!" *

* J. O. Halliwell's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 39.

That is the House, in which, according to tradition—nay, belief, sanctified by long usage and universal acceptance, the man whose name is the most notable in literature, for flexibility of intellect, openness of heart, and fulness of spirit, was born. As it now is, it is only a fragment of the original building purchased by John Shakespeare, and it wants the surroundings too of similarly antique tenements to throw into the spirit, from their gabled roofs, their jutting windows, their grotesque corbels and friezes, and their out-hanging painted signboards, quaint and pleasant fancies of “great Eliza’s golden time.” Still standing as it does, in its insulated old-fashionedness, in this somewhat common-place looking street of homely brick houses, it requires the attraction of contrast, and we find our thoughts reverting to the olden days when the heiress of Ashbies watched for the return of her husband from his field-work at Ingon, with her eldest son William in her arms ; in after years looked out for his return from school ; and, still later, welcomed him here from London, as a gentleman of wealth, renown, and personal likelihood.

Shakespeare died in 1616, leaving two daughters—Susannah, married to Dr. John Hall, and Judith, married to Mr. Thomas Quiney. Lady Barnard, *née* Hall, the dramatist’s grand-daughter and sole survivor in lineal descent from the poet, died in 1670. His brothers left no issue ; so that in little more than half a century after his own death Shakespeare’s next of kin were the descendants of his sister Joan, to whom he did “will and devise” “the house with the appurtenances in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her natural life, under the yearly rent of twelve pence ;” and to whose three sons, William, Thomas, and Michael, he did “give and bequeath” “five pounds a piece.” This house in Henley Street was occupied, in 1639, by “Jane Hucox and Joan Hart, widdowes.” In 1647 it was “in the *tenure of Thomas Hart,*” to whom Lady Barnard bequeathed it

in her will, 1669. It was then the Maidenhead Inn. The Harts held this house through this will till 1794, when Thomas Hart, fifth in descent from Joan, Shakespeare's eldest sister, died. In the spring of 1794, John Hornesby, the husband of Thomas Hart's eldest daughter, gained possession, and it then presented the appearance which the picture (bearing date 1792) shows. Hornesby was a pork butcher in a small way of business,



Shakespeare's Birthplace, 1792.

and the inn was carried on in the other half of the premises. In 1806, Hornesby disposed of this house to Thomas Court, and from Court it was bought by Trustees for the Nation, under the designation of the Birthplace Committee.

On the 16th of September, 1847, it was put up for sale by the magniloquent Mr. George Robins, and in consequence of a strong appeal to the feelings of the people, made through the public press, by which a *National Subscription* was raised for the purpose; this house was bought at the bidding of Mr. Peter Cunningham, for somewhat more than £3,000, and was placed under Trustees on behalf of the Nation. Contributions from visitors and others to a fund for the preservation of the house

were invited, and to some extent the invitation was responded to. In 1856, John Shakespeare, Esq., of Worthington, Leicester (who claimed to be a collateral descendant of the poet), bequeathed to the Trustees a sum of £2,500 for the general purposes of the fund, and an annuity of £60 for a custodian. In 1861 the Court of Chancery set aside this deed of gift, and the Committee, who had undertaken repairs and improvements on the faith of this legacy, were brought into considerable difficulties. A fee is now collected from visitors to the house for the promotion and accomplishment of the purposes for which the trustees have been appointed, and the lady custodian is also authorised to receive subscriptions, duly entered in a book



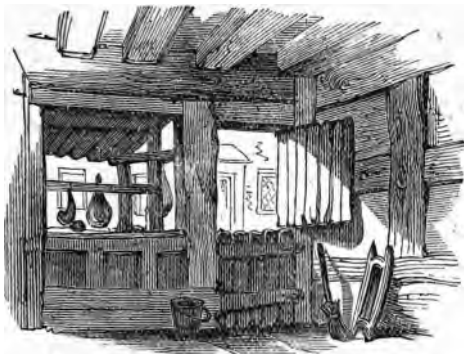
Shakespeare's Birthplace, 1847.

supplied for the purpose. A visitor's register is laid on the desk in the birth-room for the enrolment of the names of those who, through admiration, vanity, or reverence, desire to date or authenticate the fact of their having made a pilgrimage to the home of the poet, who by his ripe intellectual fulness has proved himself to be a poet—

“Not for an age but for all time.”

The visitor, on entering the birthplace from Henley Street, *passes through* an apartment which, though for some time occu-

ed as a shabby sausage-shop, was formerly the kitchen of the mily (see view). On the right of that which was once the shop,



Shakespeare's Birthplace—formerly the Kitchen.

ere is a roomy fire-place, the sides built of brick, and having a chimney-piece above cut with a low pointed arch out of a



Shakespeare's Birthplace—interior of the Shop

massive beam of oak. To the left of the door is a projection of the wall which forms a recess or "bacon cupboard," the

door of which opens in the side of the kitchen chimney of the adjoining room. The floor is covered with flag-stones, broken into fifty varied shapes ; the roof displays the bare timbers upon which the upper storey rests. A raised step leads from the shop to the kitchen ; it is a small square room, with a stone floor and a roof of massive timbers. A door opposite the shop leads to an inner room. The fireplace here is large and roomy, the mantel-tree a solid beam of oak. Within the fireplace, on one side, is a hatch, opening to the "bacon cupboard" already spoken of ; on the opposite side is a small arched recess for a chair ; here often sat John Shakespeare ; and here his young son



Shakespeare's Birthplace—the Kitchen. •

William passed his earliest days. Opposite the fireplace in the kitchen is a window, and beside this is the solid oak stair which leads by ten steps into the room in which the poet was born. It is a low-roofed apartment, receiving its only light from the large window in front. Huge oaken beams project from the plastered walls, one of considerable solidity crossing the ceiling. The fireplace projects close to the door which leads into the room ; an *immense* beam of oak forms the mantel-tree. The most curious

feature of the room is the myriad of pencilled and inked autographs, which cover walls, windows, and ceiling, and which cross and recross each other occasionally, so closely written, and so continuous, that it gives the walls the appearance of being covered with a fine spider-web.

Behind the birth-room there is another curious old apartment, whose heavy beams give an idea of strength and enduringness. Portraits of the bard adorn the walls. The chief of these is a life-size bust in oil, known as *the Stratford Portrait*.



Room in which Shakespeare was Born.

It is supposed to have belonged to the Cloptons, from whom the grandfather of Mr. W. O. Hunt bought, in 1758, the house in which Edward Clopton died in 1756. In that house the portrait spoken of was found. It is kept in an iron safe, which is thrown open during the day, and is closed at night. An inscription on the frame of the safe gives the particulars regarding its antiquity, restoration, and presentation.

The adjoining cottage to the right has been converted into a Library and Museum, containing "books, manuscripts, works of art, antiques and relics, illustrative of the life and works of Shakespeare, and of the social life and history of Stratford-upon-Avon." This important collection (of which a valuable catalogue has been published) has been permanently secured, by the conveyance of the entire contents to the Corporation of the Borough, upon trust to place the management of it under the control of a board of conservators, consisting of the Lord Lieutenant of the County, the High Steward of the Borough, the Mayor and Aldermen, the Vicar of the Parish, the Master of the Grammar School, and others.

On the northern wall of the lower room of this tenement there used to be, over the chimney, a quaint and curious ancient monument in relief in plaster, bearing date 1606, probably put up at that time, and "possibly," as Ireland says, "by the poet himself. In 1759 it was repaired and painted in a variety of colours by old Mr. Thomas Harte." Upon the scroll over the figures was inscribed, 'Samuel xvii. A.D. 1606;' and round the border, in a continuous line, was this stanza, in black letter:—

**"Golith comes with sword and spear,
And Dabid with a sling;
Although Golith rage and swear,
Down Dabid doth him bring."**



We copy Ireland's engraving of this solitary fragment of the internal decoration of Shakespeare's house ; although we much question the propriety of imagining the possibility of Shakespeare's placing such ludicrous doggrel there. The house was at that time in the occupation of his sister, and she most probably resided in the other half of this then large tenement, so that neither may have been guilty of it. The bas-relief was carried away some years ago by the proprietor of the inn.

No one now lives in the building ; no fire or light is permitted to be taken into it ; but, to preserve it from the injurious influence of damp, hot-water pipes are laid through it from a neighbouring tenement. A model of this house, "in which Shakespeare first saw the light," consisting of inlaid woods, all beautifully worked, formed a casket, in which a copy of the works of Shakespeare, handsomely bound, was presented, as the gift of the British nation, to Kossuth, 6th May, 1853. A very fair model has also been erected in the Crystal Palace, and, simulacrum though it is, attracts many visitors within its walls. At the time when John Shakespeare purchased this house, it was comparatively a mansion fitted up as the dwelling of a substantial and thriving burgess and yeoman ; now, of course, it looks somewhat small and insignificant ; yet its antique wood-work frame interlacing the frontage with squares of plaster, its latticed windows and its high pitched gable roof have now a glory to human thought that raises it into an object of reverential regard—a hallowed memorial of the world's sense of the literary power which flowed from the pen of a Stratford tradesman's son—one who was able to say and shew that—

"Honours best thrive,
When rather from our acts we them derive,
Than our foregoers."

May we not, as we pass away again round the market house, and turn to the right into High Street, guess, that with a slight transfer of Mrs. Page into Mrs. Shakespeare, Windsor into

Stratford, Evans into Jenkins, and Mrs. Quickley into some old neighbour, the following is a sketch from real life in the poet's boyhood :—

Mrs. Page. I'll be with her by and by; I'll but bring my young man here to school. Look, where his master comes; 'tis a playing day, I see.

Enter Sir HUGH EVANS.

How now, Sir Hugh? no school to-day?

Eva. No; Master Slender is get the boys leave to play.

Quick. Blessing of his heart!

Mrs. Page. Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book. I pray you ask him some questions in his accidence.

Eva. Come hither, William; hold up your head; come.

Mrs. Page. Come on sirrah; hold up your head; answer your master, be not afraid.

Eva. How many numbers is in nouns?

Will. Two.

Quick. Truly, I thought there had been one number more: because they say, od's nouns.

Eva. Peace your tattlings. What is *fair*, William?

Will. Pulcher.

Quick. Polecats! there are fairer things than polecats, sure.

Eva. You are a very simplicity, 'oman. I pray you peace. What is *lapis*, William?

Will. A stone.

Eva. And what is a stone, William?

Will. A pebble.

Eva. No, it is *lapis*; I pray you remember in your prim.

Will. *Lapis*.

Eva. That is a good William. What is *lie*, William, that does lend articles?

Will. Articles are borrowed of the pronoun: and be thus declined, *Singulariter nominativo, hic, hæc, hoc*.

Eva. *Nominativo, hig, hag, hog*,—pray you, mark: *genitivo, hujus*: Well, what is your *accusative case*?

Will. *Accusative, hunc*.

Eva. I pray you have your remembrance, child; *accusativo, hung, hang, hog*.

Quick. Hang hog, is Latin for bacon I warrant you.

Eva. Leave your prabbles, 'oman. What is the *focative case*, William?

Will. O—vocativo, O.

Eva. Remember William, focative is, *caret*.

Quick. And that is a good root.

Eva. 'Oman, forbear.

Mrs. Page. Peace!

* * * * *

Eva. Show me now, William, some declensions of your pronouns.

Will. Forsooth I have forgot.

Eva. It is *qui, quæ, quod*; if you forget your *quis*, your *quæs*, and your *quods*, you must be preeches. Go your ways, and play; go,

Mrs. Page. He is a better scholar than I thought he was.

Eva. He is a good sprag memory. Farewell Mrs. Page.

Mrs. Page. Adieu, good Sir Hugh, [Exit Sir HUGH.] Get you home, boy.—Come, we stay too long. [Exeunt.]

The Merry Wives of Windsor, IV. i.

There is not, indeed, very much in the Stratford of the present day to aid the fancy in realising the ancient borough over which his father presided as Bailiff when William Shakespeare, as a boy, left Henley Street in the morning to pursue his schoolward course. One such house, oriel-windowed, timber-framed, and adorned with fleur-de-lys designs, built in 1596, may be seen in the High Street, to give us an idea of the dwellings in which the richer tradesmen lived, when the floors were strewn with rushes, and on Sundays or holidays the folks donned doublets of velvet, with ruffles and lace round neck and wrist; wore peach-coloured hosen and slashed shoes; sailed along in taffetas and farthingales, with fresh starched collars and brand-new fans.

THE TOWN HALL.

On the way we pass the Town Hall, a rather homely building of the Tuscan order, which was the centre of the three days jubilee of 1769, set on foot by Garrick, at whose theatre a benefit was given for the raising of funds for the erection of a statue to Shakespeare. The statue then presented by Garrick, who was master of the ceremonies at the jubilee, to the town,

occupies a conspicuous niche at the north end. It represents Shakespeare leaning on a pillar, pointing to a scroll on which are his own lines, descriptive of a Poet, from "A Midsummer Night's Dream," v. i., and on the pedestal are these words (pronominally altered) from Hamlet, i. ii.—

"Take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again."

In the interior there are some portraits; among others, those of Shakespeare by *Wilson*, Garrick by *Gainsborough*, the Duke of Dorset, Queen Anne, &c. We pass on now to the end of Chapel Street, and reach the site of

NEW PLACE,

the Home of Shakespeare, purchased by him after the hard toil of years, where some of his latest and best dramas were composed, and where, in the enjoyment of that quiet country life which he has so exquisitely depicted in his works, he spent in dignified retirement and honest simplicity the closing years of his life of prudence, perseverance, thrift, and genius, as we have said, no longer exists. An elaborate history of it has been prepared by James Orchard Halliwell, the chief Shakesperean of our day, and published under the title of "An Historical Account of the New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, the last residence of Shakespeare," 1864. It was situated at the corner of Chapel Street and Chapel Lane, and was probably the residence of the Poet's family shortly after his purchase of it in 1597, and the place in which he spent his summers during his London theatrical vacations. Though it seems at one time to have been let to his cousin, Thomas Greene, Town Clerk of Stratford, yet "from Michaelmas, 1610, to his death in 1616," we may safely conclude that Shakespeare lived a great part of his time at Stratford, paying occasional visits to London, but interesting himself with local matters.* Of this we have proof in the remarkable entries

* Halliwell's "New Place," p. 26.

respecting him in the diary of Thomas Greene, 1614, and 1615. Shakespeare, in his Will speaks of New Place as "the house wherein I now dwell," 1616. During the recent excavations a few relics have been gleaned which have been placed in the Museum in Henley Street.

Here New Place stood, with its great garden stretching down towards the Avon, with its pleasant orchardry, from the shady walks and retired arbours of which, through the rich greenery of the trees he could see the tower of the Chapel of the Guild, and even hear, while reclining in the shade, probably his "custom in the afternoon," the fine music of the Church-service celebrating within the chapel. The rooms in which he dwelt, the library he had collected, the study in which he composed his wondrous works, the mansion in which he passed many of his latest hours, in which the marriage parties partook of the wedding festivities, wherein his poet-companions from the metropolis were welcomed to his hospitable board, and felt how essentially great he was who, amid all the flatteries of Court and crowd, could so calmly settle down, in his lordship in the country, and enjoy the every-day life and interest of his townsmen. These have passed away and are not even restorable; but the very ground over whose odd-yard-land he had walked, and the very soil in which his flowers grew and his trees flourished are here; here, too, there is a Shakespeare garden; perhaps there will soon be a Shakespeare monument, for here, indeed, are scenes intimately connected with the memories of the poet's life, such as bring him before us in the fadeless strength of his personality.

In reference to New Place, it is perhaps not without interest to remark that in Shakespeare's birth-year that mansion passed from the hands of William Clopton into those of William Bott, of Coventry, who immediately on his settlement in the

town was elected an alderman ; but having spoken evil words of his fellow-magistrates, he was "expulsyed of the counsell," "to be none of the companye," May 9th, 1565, and immediately, July 4th, as successor to Wm. Bott, proprietor of New Place, "John Shakspeyr ys appwyntyd an Alderman." Two years afterwards Bott left the town, having disposed of New Place to William Underhill, gentleman. He, in his turn, sold the mansion thirty years afterwards to the son of the Henley Street woolstapler. Often when, satchel in hand, with "shining morning face," he hurried through Henley street, with its timber-framed, steep-gabled, brick-built houses, its unpaved, deep-guttered roadway, and its gardens here and there with a lime or chestnut flinging its shadow over the path as he paced towards the south-east, with bright and thoughtful face, conscious of a well-conned task, past the Market Cross, along High Street and Chapel Street, he must have looked admiringly at the mansion of New Place ; but scarcely even in his most ambitious boyish dreams could he foresee his mastery of the most important house then in the town, and all the accompanying fame of his middle age. We may now turn to

THE CHAPEL OF THE GUILD.

The Chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross and St. John the Baptist is a handsome and interesting Gothic structure. It is described by Leland in 1540, as "a right goodly Chapell in a fayre street towards the south ende of the towne"—"newly re-edified by one Hugh Clopton, Mayor of London." In 1547, Edward VI.'s Commissioners reported of it, "yet is also a thinge very nete and necessary that the Guild Chapell of Stretfford stand undefaced, for that it was alwayes a Chappell of ease for the seperacion of the sicke persons from the [w]hole in tyme of plague and standeth in the face of the towne." This Chapel, with the exception of the chancel, was rebuilt by Sir Hugh

St. Olopton, in the reign of Henry VII. The present chancel was erected in 1450 and 1451. Sir Hugh left funds and directions for its completion by his will, 1406. With the exception of the cross which used to stand over the porch—but was blown down in 1845, and the pinnacles removed on account of their insecurity in 1846—the exterior of the Guild Chapel is one of the few objects in Stratford now which are seen by us in the same form as they appeared to the eye of Shakespeare; and it possesses a peculiar interest as being so near to the site of New Place. "Upon this exterior," says Mr. Halliwell, "the poet must have gazed many hundreds of times, so that it almost becomes a relic of his personal history." The interior has been sadly altered, the images thrown down, its paintings whitewashed, and the whole in recent years modernised.

In 1804, when the interior was undergoing repairs, a series of *fresco* paintings—which have been copied in colours, and published with description, by Nichols, in Fisher's "Antiquities of Warwickshire"—were discovered upon the walls. These were much injured and could not be preserved. They "constituted a pictorial romance—the History of the Holy Cross, from its origin as a tree, at the creation of the world, to its rescue from the pagan Cosdroy, King of Persia, by the Christian King Heraclius, and its final exaltation at Jerusalem—the anniversary of which event was celebrated at Stratford at its annual fair, held on the 14th of September. There were other pictures of saints and martyrdoms; and one especially, of the murder of Thomas à Becket, which exhibits great force, without that grotesqueness which generally belongs to our early paintings. There were fearful pictures, too, of the last judgment, with the Seven Deadly Sins visibly portrayed—the punishments of the evil, the rewards of the just."* It has been supposed that even in Shakespeare's days the King's Newe Schole at Stratford

* Charles Knight's William Shakespeare; a Biography, p. 31.

was held in this Chapel. It is certain that in February 18, 1594-5, the Corporation resolvéd "that there shall be no school kept in the Chapel from this time following ;" but it is probable that this was only a temporary thing while the schoolrooms were undergoing repairs. Perhaps on this fact, and with reference to the then incumbent, Alexander Aspinall, we owe Malvolio's portrait as "strange, stout, in yellow stockings and cross-gartered," "most villainously ; like a pedant that keeps a school i' the church," and "does smile his face into more lines than are in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies." I have a shrewd suspicion that both Holofernes and Sir Hugh Evans had their original in Thomas Jenkins, schoolmaster at Stratford, 1580, most probably a Welshman, though it *might be* that Sir William Gylbarte, his assistant in 1585, sat for one of the pictures. However this may be, the Chapel is "still connected with his history, for here there has been, from time immemorial, a pew appropriated to the owner of New Place, and in that Chapel, Shakespeare, after 1597, would listen to the ministers of the reformed religion."*

It was in the very year of Shakespeare's birth that in their iconoclastic zeal against the monuments of the old faith, two shillings were by the Corporation "payd for defasyng ymage in the Chappell." This Protestant enthusiasm continued to animate Stratford long afterwards, and at length deepened into Puritanism. This fact, together with the wariness exercised in Elizabeth's time in the choice of magistrates, who would and could take the oath of supremacy, might be regarded as proof that Shakespeare's father adhered to the reformed faith ; while the honourable place of rest assigned to the poet, close to the very communion rails of the Church of the Trinity, and the erection of his monumental effigy—as we shall see—on the walls of its chancel, offer the clearest disproof of Davies' statement that "Shakespeare died a Papist."

* Halliwell's Life of William Shakespeare, p. 95.

No object in Stratford could have been more familiar to Shakespeare than the Chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross, that venerable and elegant edifice, which still remains, in all essential particulars, the same in external appearance as it was in the sixteenth century. "When a boy, he must almost daily have passed its tower on his way to school. Later in life, the eastern end of it must have been a familiar object from his garden, out of the lane door from which he could never have passed without the antique porch, with its quaint gargoyles presenting themselves to his view. When at New Place, too, how often must he have heard and been charmed with the sounds of one of the sweetest bells ever framed by man, tones which are still heard, and which still inexpressibly charm, and which may have been the last—must have been amongst the latest—sounds that fell upon his ears during the last night that he spent upon earth. Think of this when listening to the knolling of that bell; to 'the sweete and perfecte sownde' it possessed when made in 1591, and which the recast metal still retains; and let it be one of the links to connect the Stratford of this day with the memory of the great dramatist. This bell was knolled on the morning of 19th April, 1616, to summon a meeting of the Council, at which Julius Shawe, Richard Hathaway, and Thomas Greene, all intimate friends of Shakespeare, were present. In all probability, on that day the poet was lying on his death-bed."*

THE GUILDHALL.

The ground floor of the long building adjoining the Chapel was the Guildhall. It has undergone many alterations since it was first founded, in 1269, for the Brethren of the Holy Cross; but it is even yet a very ancient building. It was not only the

* J. O. Halliwell's "The New Place," &c., p. 43.

place where the Corporation meetings were held ; it was also the place where, in the youthhood of Shakespeare, the chief bailiff, on some cause for "such eruptions and breaking out of mirth," would present the lieges with "some delightful ostentation, show, or pageant, or antique or firework," especially when the players—though one would think "their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways"—chanced to travel that they might give the country towns a taste of their quality. On hearing of their coming, a good-humoured bailiff would decide

"He that plays the king shall be welcome : his majesty shall have tribute of me ; the adventurous knight shall use the foil and target ; the lover shall not sigh gratis ; the humourous man shall end his part in peace ; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere ; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't."

In 1569, under the bailiffship of John Shakespeare, both the Queen's players and the Earl of Worcester's players visited Stratford, and played in the Guildhall ; in 1573, Lord Leicester's players—perhaps direct from Kenilworth Castle—gave performances and got a gratuity ; in 1576, my Lord of Warwick's players and the Earl of Worcester's players "were well bestowed." My Lord of Leicester's men came next year, and, as a proof that they had been pleased as well as pleasing, my Lord of Worcester's players paid Stratford a visit again in 1577 ; my Lord Strange's players and the Countess of Essex's players both performed, and the Earl of Derby's dramatic servants appeared in 1580. In this long low room, therefore, between his ninth and his sixteenth year, young William Shakespeare had, we may suppose, opportunity of witnessing the changing fortune and life exhibited in "the abstract and brief chronicles of the time" which the players put on the council-hall platform for a stage ; and, perhaps, this made him come to the resolve, I'll "get me a fellowship in a cry of players, sir ;" for we are told by Aubrey "*he began early to make essays at dramatic poetry.*" The Earl

of Leicester's players, who built the Blackfriar's Theatre in 1574, under the Queen's license, were probably for the most part Warwickshire men. Of these James Burbage, probably the father of Richard Burbage, the player, and Cuthbert Burbage, the publisher, held the chief place. During the seven succeeding years there were several companies of players in Stratford annually, in 1587 no fewer than six different sets.

The bent of Shakespeare's taste and talents must have been largely influenced by these theatrical exhibitions, and the circumstance of his having acquaintances among the players may have turned his mind to look upon the stage as a means of livelihood, and given him the casting motive in his indeterminate state.

If, as we suppose, Shakespeare's mind was early developed, and he began to woo the muses first with Anne Hathaway—to whom

“His qualities were beauteous as his form,”

—for his prompter, it is not improbable that a comparison of his own verses with those which he heard delivered by the players in Guildhall led him to suppose he was “as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best” of them. “He was naturally inclined to poetry and acting,” Aubrey says, and with these incitements and several friends and neighbours, being in connection with the theatres, it is not wonderful that he sought to enrol himself among those who then fulfilled for the people the duty of public amusement and instruction. In this Guildhall, then, we are to suppose him to have gotten his life's purpose fixed; but we must pass up stairs to see where those powers were nurtured of which the issues have been so precious.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

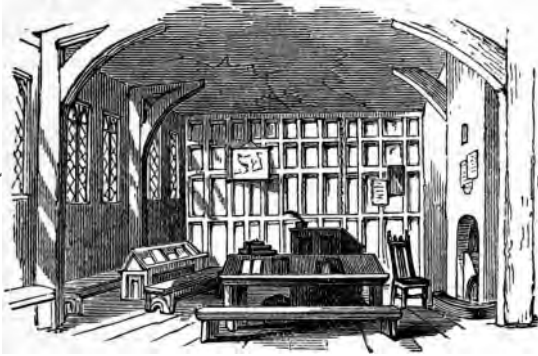
The Free Grammar School, situate in the High Street, beside the Chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross, was founded A.D. 1482, by Thomas Jolyffe, a native of the town, a priest and one of the brethren of the Ancient Guild of the Holy Cross. At the dissolution of the monasteries, the estate was seized by Henry VIII., but it was afterwards restored and put under the care of the Corporation. The school was refounded and incorporated in the 7th year of the reign of Edward VI., 1553, when William Smart, A.B., in succession to Sir William Dalam, was appointed schoolmaster, with a salary of £20 per annum from the Corporation. Walter Roche, 1570, Thomas



Exterior of the Grammar School.

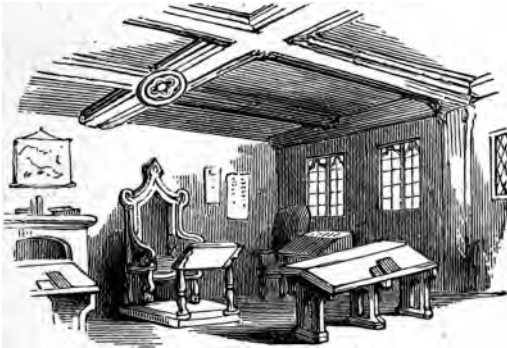
Hunt, 1577, and Thomas Jenkins, 1580, were his successors, so far as Shakespearian interest in the school extends. By the constitution, boys resident in the town, of seven years of age and able to read, were admissible as free scholars, and in 1571, when William Shakespeare was ripe for school training, his father was chief alderman of the town, and official patron of the school; and here, undoubtedly, "William became a good scholar," so far as time and opportunity permitted; so good a *scholar that even Ben Johnson, the pupil of Camden, who*

prided himself as being almost matchless, admitted that he had "small Latin and less Greek"—which Greek could only then be acquired through Latin—Latin so comprehended as to be readily translatable at sight.



The Latin Schoolroom.

The Latin schoolroom is situated over the old Guildhall, and is that portion of the building nearest the Chapel. It is a



Interior—The Mathematical School.

perfectly plain room, with a low plaster ceiling ; but from the massive beams at the sides of the room, and those above the

modern plaster, to which the struts from the side beams form a support, as well as from the external appearance of the deeply-pitched roof, there can be little doubt that an open timber roof originally decorated this apartment. The mathematical school-room beside it has a flat roof, crossed by two beams of the Tudor era ; and in the centre of the roof, where they meet each other, is a circular ornament or boss. The school has been recently repaired, and it has entirely lost its look of antiquity.

The court-yard of the school in the olden time presented many features of interest ; but the hand of modern "improve-



Court-yard of the Grammar School.

ment" has swept them away. The schools here, at a period so recent as 1840, were approached by an antique external stair, roofed with tile, up which the boys had ascended from the time of Shakespeare. This characteristic feature has passed away ; *its only record* is the cut here given ; the court-yard has been

sub-divided and walled ; and the original character of this portion of the building has departed for ever.

Of a desk, traditionally reported to have been that which Shakespeare used at school, and now in Henley Street, the following is an engraving :—



THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

The Church of the Holy Trinity, which stands pleasantly and picturesquely on the bank of the Avon, is a sacred edifice, of large size and unusual beauty, and, as Dugdale says, “of a very ancient structure little less than the Conqueror’s time, as I guess by the fabric of the tower steeple ; but part thereof besides hath been rebuilt at several times.” It is a cruciform building consisting of a nave and side aisles, a transept, and a chancel. This chancel, originally built by Dr. Thomas Balsal, then (1465-1491) Dean of Stratford, has recently been carefully restored, the style of its beautiful architecture having been sedulously preserved. The tower and spire rise from the centre of the cross to a height of 163 feet. A dense mass of foliage obscures the view of the church as it is approached from the town, and from gateway to doorway the visitor passes along an alley of thick over-arching limes, through the branches and leaves of which the light plays on the lettered stones which form at once a pavement and memorials of the dead. Having

reached the dark and gloomy Gothic door and entered the church, we at once acknowledge that the interior matches well with the exterior. Passing along between its rows of old oak pews, some of which are curiously and grotesquely carved, we make our way to the chancel, because here, as Washington Irving has truthfully said, "the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakespeare."

This idea pervades the place; "the whole pile seems but as his mausoleum." Though we may believe that

"Nothing can cover his high fame but Heaven,
No monuments set off his memories
But the eternal substance of his greatness."

We can yet rejoice that he does repose in this his long home, so near to his natal spot, and in a place where his ears had listened to the message of the Saviour, in whose merits and mercy he died trusting. Here, probably, John Milton stood, during the Easter term of 1630—when there was but a timber steeple about 42 feet high, covered with lead, on the tower of the church in the place of the splendid spire which now surmounts and adorns the sacred edifice, which was not erected till 1764, the Bicentenary of Shakespeare's birth—and here the chief of our holy singers grew enrapt with the conception expressed in his appreciative "Sonnet on Shakespeare," as to how needless it was—

"That his hallowed relicts should be hid
Under a star-y-pointing pyramid."

And here, too, pilgrim-spirits from every land and clime have stood, as in the place where they are brought nearest to the reality and presence of the marvellous poet, who was

Not one, but all mankind's epitome.

The dear dust of England's "myriad-minded" son lies here, and before us is the nearest and most trustworthy visible

bodiment of the man Shakespeare we can look upon. We
er, of course, to the



TOMB OF SHAKESPEARE.

It is placed against a blank window, on the left of the altar, as he faces the altar. How soon it was erected after poet's death, we cannot confidently say ; but, that it was ere 1623, we can ascertain from Leonard Digges's verses fixed to the first edition of the poet's works. A half-length

figure of Shakespeare is placed in a niche under an arch and an entablature, which are supported by Corinthian columns of black marble, with gilded capitals and bases; above the entablature, on a pier, are his Arms—"Or, on a bend Sable, a tilting spear of the first, point upwards, headed argent;" Crest, "a Falcon rising argent, supporting a spear, in pale, Or;" motto, "*mon sans droiet*"—not without right. On each side of the pier are seated cherubs, one holding an inverted torch, with a skull beside him, the other a spade; on the apex above is another skull. The bust—which displays a fine full round face—the forehead towering, the eyes large-orbed, the lips expressive, the nose full, but not too prominent, the chin set, and the whole head well poised and massive—is now, as it was originally, painted after nature. The eyes are light hazel; the hair and beard auburn. The shoulders are free from stoop, the chest is broad and capacious, the right hand formerly held a pen, as if the original had been employed in composition at the moment when the artist had fixed his lineaments. The dress is a scarlet doublet, slashed on the breast, over which is a loose black gown without sleeves. The upper part of the cushion is crimson, the lower green; the cord which binds it and the tassels are gilt. Beneath the cushion upon which the poet is writing is inscribed:—

JVDICIO PYLIVM GENIO SOCRATEM, ARTE MARONEM,
TERRA TEGIT, POPVLVS MÆRET, OLYMPVS HABET.*

STAY, PASSENGER; WHY GOEST THOV BY SO FAST?
READ, IF THOV CANST, WHOM ENVIOVS DEATH HATH PLAST
WITHIN THIS MONVMENT: SHAKESPEARE, WITH WHOME
QVICKE NATVRE DIDE; WHOSE NAME DO'TH DECK YS. TOMBE
FAR MORE THEN COST; SITH ALL YT. HE HATH WRITT
LEAVES LIVING ART BVT PAGE TO SERVE HIS WITT.

Obiit. Ano. Doi. 1616.
Ætatis 53. Die 23. Ap.

* [In judgment a Nestor, In genius a Socrates, in art a Virgil. The earth covers him, the people mourn for him, Olympus has him.]

As Dr. John Hall was a scholar—his “Select Observations English Bodies of Eminent Persons in Desperate Diseases” first written in Latin, and afterwards Englished by James Hook—he may have been the author of the Latin distich under the tomb, which, considering the period at which it was written, is a highly suggestive and concise appraisal of the special merits of him who possessed so much cultured thought, that

“On the tips of his subduing tongue
All kinds of arguments, and questions deep,
All replication prompt and reason strong,
For his advantage still did wake and sleep :
To make the weeper laugh, the laugher weep,
He had the dialect and different skill—
Catching all passions in his craft of Will ;
That he did in the general bosome reign
Of young, of old ; and sexes both enchanted,
To dwell with him in thought, or to remain
In personal duty, following where he haunted :
Consents bewitched, ere he desire, have granted,
And *dialogued* for him what he would say,
Asked their own *Wills* and made their *Wills* obey.”

The principal object of attraction on this monument is the counterfeit presentment of the “poet in his habit as he lived,” wearing the garb in which “William Shakespeare, gentleman,” on high days and holydays walked along the streets of London and of Stratford. This monumental bust was most probably erected by his widow, by and with the consent and aid of Dr. John Hall and the two daughters of the poet. The artist, Gerard Johnson, “tomb-maker,” was twenty-six years resident in England, and may have seen Shakespeare, though as painters, sculptors, and anatomists coincide in thinking it likely that it has been worked from a cast of his features taken after death, that may have made little matter. We have every reason to regard it as an authentic, and, in the main, a faithful representation of the form, features, and expression of the dramatist.

Mr. Fairholt says that “an intent study of this bust enforces the belief that all the manifold peculiarities of feature so

characteristic of the poet, and which no *chance* could have originated and no theory account for, must have resulted from its being a transcript of the man.

"It appeals," says Mr. John Britton, "to our eyes and understanding with all the force of truth. We view it as a family record, as a memorial raised by the affection and esteem of his relatives, to keep alive contemporary admiration, and to excite the glow of enthusiasm in posterity. This invaluable effigy is attested by tradition, consecrated by time, and preserved in the inviolability of its own simplicity and sacred station."

While looking at the bust, as one usually does, from the ground, it should be remembered that as the head is some eight or nine feet from the grave-stones, the features are forced shortened, and the eyes—for which probably the artist had no guide—appear as if they had a vague stare, while the arch of the eyebrows and the character of the eyelids do not come properly into view to harmonise the features. Hence the fulness of the chin and throat, the slight fall in the cheek, and the little bit of teeth-shewing, as if the poet were in the act of smiling, come into too much prominence and subtract from the apparent dignity, gravity, or rather suavity of the portrait, and, at first sight, somewhat disappoint spectators. Still no one can mistake the strong purpose-like solidity of that mass of brain or fail to regard it as the head of a shrewd, kindly, wise, and business-minding individual. Indeed, we must never forget that poet as he was, "the *business* of Shakespeare, through all the active portion of his life—the business by which he gained his livelihood and realised a competent income—was that of a dramatic artist," a reproduction of the poetry of *life*; and the bust shows just such a man as one would suppose to be capable at once of fulness of life in himself, and of managing others so as to work out his aims by their agency. The most careful

analysis and most thorough testing have only resulted in giving reason for affirming that the bust has been executed with extreme delicacy and remarkable ease.

As we stand beside his grave, can we avoid wonder at the grand uniqueness of the life he passed? "He did his work so silently, greeted his fellows so pleasantly, and retired so quietly, that the men whose faces now shine for us, chiefly from his reflected light, did not notice him sufficiently to tell us what he was like; did not see that this man Shakespeare had come to bring a new soul into the land, that in his plays the spirit of a new faith was to obtain magnificent embodiment—that here was the spontaneous effort of the nation, a spirit to assert itself in our literature, and stand forth free from the old Greek tyranny which otherwise might have continued to crush our drama, as it seems to have crippled our sculpture to this day—that in these plays all the rills of language and knowledge running from other lands were to be merged and made one in this great ocean of English life. Not one of them saw clearly, as we do, that whereas Homer was the poet of Greece, and Dante the poet of Italy; this gentle Willie Shakespeare, player and playwright, was destined to be the poet of a world!" *

We may now cast our eyes on the splendid marble tomb of John Combe, Shakespeare's friend, who died in 1614. It is also the work of Gerard Johnson, and gives a fair idea of his skill in sculpture.

The gravestones of the Shakespeare family lie in a row in front of the altar rails, upon the second step leading to it. His wife's is immediately beneath his tomb. It is a flat stone, the surface injured by time, having a small brass plate let in with this inscription—here given literally, as are all the other inscriptions; they have been incorrectly printed in most instances:—

* "Shakespeare's Sonnets," by Gerald Massey, p. 529

HERE LYETH INTERRED THE BODY OF ANNE WIFE
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. WHO DEPTED THIS LIFE THE
6 DAY OF AVG: 1623. BEING OF THE AGE OF 67 YEARES.

Vbera tu mater, tu lac vitamq; dedisti,
Vae mihi pro tanto munere Saxa dabo,
Quam mallem amoveat lapidem bonus Angel' ore'
Exeat Christi corpus imago tua;
Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Christe, resurget,
Clausa licet tumulto mater, et astra petet.

Next comes that placed over the body of the poet. It is right here to state that the four lines upon it have been generally printed with an absurd mixture of great and small letters: it is here carefully reduced from a rubbing taken on the stone. The only peculiarity it possesses over ordinary inscriptions is the

GOOD FRENDE FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE:
BLESE BE ^EY MAN ^T SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE ^TY MOVES MY BONES.

abbreviation for the word *that*, and the grouping together of some of the letters after the fashion of a monogram. Other instances of similar usages are common in inscriptions of the same age. There is a traditionary story, bearing date 1693, which says, "His wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him," but that, "not one for fear of the curse above said dare touch his gravestone."

Next to that of Shakespeare lies a stone commemorating the resting-place of Thomas Nash, who married the only daughter of the poet's daughter, Susanna; this lady afterwards married Sir John Barnard, and died at Abingdon, near Northampton, in 1670, in whom the direct line of the poet's issue ceased. Dr. John Hall, her father, lies next; and last comes

a, his wife. The whole of the rhyming part of her had been obliterated, and upon the place was cut an inscription to the memory of one Richard Watts. This has now been erased, and the original inscription restored, by rubbing the surface of the stone and re-cutting the letters. The windows of Hall and Nash have also been renovated by deepening the arches and re-cutting the armorial bearings, which has been done under the judicious and careful superintendence of R. B. W. Esq., of Stratford, at the sole expense of the Rev. W. W. ; for which care they deserve honourable remembrance to the lovers of Shakespeare.

Perhaps, before we leave the church, we had better look at the record of Shakespeare's baptism. It is contained in the register of Stratford, a tall narrow book of considerable thickness, the leaves formed of very fine vellum. The Register of Stratford-upon-Avon commences in 1558. There is an entry in the register-book of Stratford that is interesting to us—to all men—to universal mankind. We have all received a share of a legacy from one whose progress, from the cradle to the grave is here recorded, a bequest large enough for us all, and which will come after us. Pause we on the *one* entry of the book which most concerns the human race:—William, son of Shakespeare, baptized on the 26th April, 1564. That entry is now marked with three crosses to call attention to it. The date of the year and the word April occur three lines above the baptism, the baptism being the fourth registered in that month, out of fifty-five which occurred in the same year. But this is only a transcript, attested by the vicar and four churchwardens on every page of the Registers from 1558 to 1600; the original is, therefore, only a copy of the original entry made at a date (1600) when Shakespeare was a person of sufficient consequence in Stratford to make it desirable to be accurate in writing, if not in the Latin.

ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, SHOTTERY.

At less than a mile's distance to the west of Stratford, a pleasant stroll through quiet and fertile corn fields and pasture lands is Shottery, the picturesque little rustic village in which Anne Hathaway was born; in which Shakespeare wooed (or was wooed?) and won; and whence the bridal party somewhat, "mis-graffed in respect of years," went joyously away over the cross of the hill, tracing their path to the church of Luddington, in which Thomas Hunt, Shakespeare's old schoolmaster, acted as curate, and even then (as has been supposed) waited—

"In the lawful name of marrying
To give *their hearts* united ceremony."

The bridegroom saying to himself, meanwhile, perhaps, "in brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it." Did the lads and lasses sing as they went along—

"Wedding is great Juno's crown.
O blessed bond of board and bed!
'Tis Hymen peoples every town.
High wedlock then be honoured!
Honour, high honour and renown
To Hymen, god of every town!"

And what were the comments of the villagers? did they agree in saying that—

"He is the half part of a blessed man
Left to be finished by such a she.
And she a fair divided excellence
Whose fulness of perfection lies in *him*?"

Shottery is a genuine country village, consisting of a few straggling farm-houses and brick and timber cottages, standing apart from each other in their old gardens and orchard-crofts. Simple, old-fashioned, and almost untouched by the innovations of modern life, we are here amidst the charmed past of Shakespeare's time. In a small valley, through which flows a *murmuring* brooklet, at the far end of the village, with its

gable-end to the road, and its front covered with roses and creeping plants, there stands a long tenement of primitive structure. A timber-framing chequers it into squares, filled up with brick and plaster-work. Its deep-gabled roof is thatched with straw, in which tufts and clumps of moss intermingle their greenery with the sun-browned yellow. A bare corn-coloured vine strays creepingly up the walls, the doors are grey with age, and string-lifted, clumsy, wooden latches form their day fastenings. The wooden pins which fix the framing have never



Anne Hathaway's Cottage, from the Garden.

been cut off, but stick up some inches still from the wall, and the flickering shadows of the orchard-trees play over the front. Passing up a narrow grassy pathway, between hedges of boxwood, a few uneven stone-steps bring us to the rude terrace which forms the approach to the central cottage—for the house, though in Richard Hathaway's time it formed one dwelling, now consists of three tenements, the middle one of which contained the chief rooms. those in which the family resided.

The garden contains the old English herbs and flowers, popular in Shakespeare's age—rue, sage, mint, thyme, lavender, marigold, rosemary, honey-suckle, cellandine, dewberries, &c.; and in the orchard, full of knolls and hollows, there yet grow apples, pears, cherries, plums, &c. Beside the door, facing towards the orchard-croft, there is a raised *plat* up three or four steps with a seat on it, whence one may enjoy the beautiful prospect towards the green-clad uplands of Ilmington, to the south, and towards the east, see the spire of Stratford Church peeping up over the elm-trees. About the time of Shakespeare's marriage, all the freeholders in Shottery, except one, Robert Woodward, were Hathaways, and around us, as we stand here, at the foot of the breezy slopes of this secluded hamlet we see the old residences of the bride's friends. The entire scene, almost, belongs to Shakespeare's time. Upon these same landscapes, cottages and gardens, Shakespeare, also, under the inspiration of early love, looked and was glad.

The house itself is a long thatched tenement of timber and plaster, substantially built upon a foundation of squared slabs of lias shale, which is a characteristic of the Warwickshire cottages. On the central chimney these letters and figures denote the repairing of the house by John Hathaway. In reality it has undergone little, if any, organic change.

Let the reader look at Mr. Fairholt's engraving of Anne Hathaway's cottage from the garden, and this will be readily understood. The square, compact, and taller half of the building to the reader's left forms one house. The other two are divided by the passage, which runs entirely through the lower half, from the door in front, to which the steps lead, to that seen close to the railings in our back view. This passage serves for both tenements. That to the right on entering consists of one large room below, with a chimney extending the whole width of

the house, with an oven and boiler, shewing that this was the principal kitchen, when the house was all in one. The door to the left leads into the parlour, which is here engraved. It is a

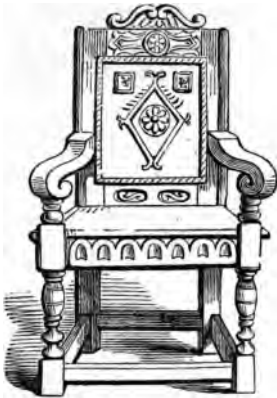


large, low-roofed room, ceiled with strong beams of timber, and much resembling the kitchen of Shakespeare's birthplace. A "bacon cupboard," of similar construction, is also on the left side of the fire-place, upon the transverse bar of which is cut



"IH · EH · JB · 1697," the initials of John Hathaway, his wife Anne, and, it may be the maker of the door, which

has been cut ornamentally. Of "Shakespeare's courting chair," which Ireland purchased out of this property in 1792, we engrave a copy from the "Picturesque Views on the Avon," which he published, although we have great doubts not only of its genuineness, but of Ireland's good faith.



Shakespeare's Courting Chair.

The bedroom over this parlour is ascended by a ladder-like stair ; and here stands an old carved bedstead, certainly as old as the Shakespeare era. It is elaborately and tastefully executed, and has been handed down as an heirloom with the house. Whether there in Anne's time, or brought there since, it is ancient enough for her or her family to have slept in, and adds an interest to the quaint bedroom. In the room, in a



Bedroom in Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

chest beside it, is a pillow-case and sheet, marked "E. H.," and ornamented with open-work down the centre ; they are of homespun fabric, the work of "the spinster," when single country girls earned the name.

The back view of the house is more picturesque than the front one. The ground rises from the road to a level with the back-door. Tall trees overshadow it, and a rustic stile beside *them leads into* a meadow, where stand some cottages as old a

the home of the Hathaways. There is much to interest the student-lover of the old rural life of England in Shottery.



Anne Hathaway's Cottage.—Back View.

Of Shakespeare's love for Anne Hathaway and of Shottery, we have this unimpeachable evidence that it was the first place, after he had acquired money enough to make investments, in which he was "desirous of disbursing a sum on the purchase of some odd-yard-lands." He did not succeed in this desire, and we must now look elsewhere for scenes of Shakespearian interest.

CHARLECOTE.

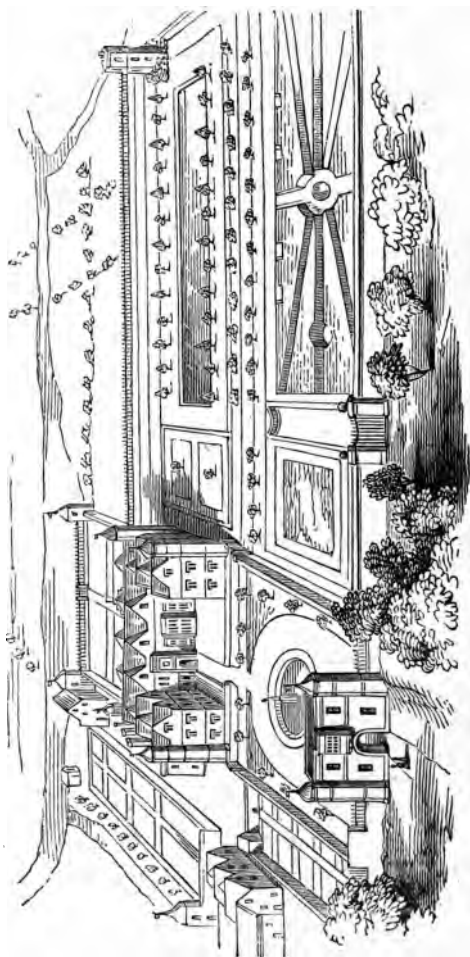
Leaving Stratford by the long stone bridge of fourteen pointed arches, which Sir Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry VII., built across the Avon, so as to displace the "Straete" or "stret" ford, through the broad but shallow waters of that river, by which passage had been wont to be made; and, taking the road which turns towards the left, we pass the hamlet of Tiddington, and the quiet pastoral village of Alveston on the way to Charlecote Park. Nearly opposite Alveston, to the left of the

Warwick and Stratford road, we see the grounds of Welcombe, of which Shakespeare "was not able to bear the enclosing." Old thorn-trees, gnarled and twisted, tusk-rooted, and scant of leaf grow on them, which may have been young when Shakespeare accompanied his father through these lands on his way to Snitterfield, where his grandsire and his uncles dwelt. Traces of ancient earthworks are seen as we go along, and a tumulus which may cover the remains of some hero of the olden time attracts notice. Here John and his brother William Combe, both good old friends of Shakespeare, lived, though their house is now gone; and here, in their company, Shakespeare must have spent many a pleasant hour, and enjoyed much merry chat and social glee. When we have proceeded about four miles from Stratford, a cross road branching off to the left skirts—Charlecote Park—a scene notable in itself, independently of its mythical relation to the genius who sheds magic on all the neighbourhood.

Charlecote!—the name is familiar to every reader of the life of Shakespeare, and the story connected with it is also one widely known. It was first told by Rowe in 1709, in these terms:—

"An extravagance that he was guilty of forced him both out of his country, and that way of living which he had taken up; and though it seemed at first to be a blemish upon his good manners, and a misfortune to him, yet it afterwards happily proved the occasion of exciting one of the greatest geniuses that ever was known in dramatic poetry. He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into bad company, and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that illusage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet is said to have been so very bitter, that it redoubled the prosecution to that degree, that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London."

It was probably founded on the notes which have been preserved in Oxford, of which the following is an account:—



Charlecote, as it appeared in 1722.

"The Reverend William Fulman, a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who died in 1688, bequeathed his papers to the Reverend Richard Davis, of Sandford, Oxfordshire; and on the death of Mr. Davis, in 1707, these papers were deposited in the library of Corpus Christi. Fulman appears to have made some collections for the biography of our English poets, and under the name Shakespeare, he gives the dates of his birth and death. But Davis, who added notes to his friend's manuscripts, affords us the following piece of information:— 'He was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits; particularly from Sir Lucy, who had him oft whipped, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native country, to his great advancement. But his revenge was so great, that he is his Justice Clodpate, and calls him a great man, and that, in allusion to his name, bore three louses rampant for his arms.'"

The earliest date of this tradition must have been at least a century after the time of the event recorded as occurring in Shakespeare's youth. It is a loosely put-together story, and is exceedingly inaccurate in its details, as it at first emerges into letters, and, unlike a matter of fact, it has grown more definite as it reaches our own time; and the ballads that came out about the Ireland forgery time are almost as un-Shakespearian as productions could possibly be.

'That Shakespeare knew every nook and corner, every sequestered dingle and romantic recess of those old woods; that he had a thousand times dived into their depths, and made himself familiar with all the winged and four-footed animals that inhabited them, treasuring up those fancies and visions to which he afterwards gave such exquisite realization in his "As You Like it," laying the scene in the Warwickshire Forest of Arden, no one need doubt. The true poetry alike of the woodlands, the chase and humanity are therein all sympathetically brought out. But this does not necessitate our belief in the deer-stealing legend, which evidently had a mythical origin in an attempt to glean from his plays some stray snatches of biography. "The Merry Wives of Windsor" was probably not produced till after 1600, the date of Sir Thomas Lucy's death, and we do not think Shakespeare likely to wreak out a twenty year's old spite, in such a form as his commentators fancy he does, by calling his (supposed) persecutor Justice Shallow, and quadrupling

merely as a petty disguise, the three white *luces* the Lucy's bear in their coat armorial. It would have been a most ungentle (might we not say a cowardly) revenge of the gentle Shakespeare; and, besides, Sir Thomas Lucy was no Justice Shallow, but an able administrator of county business, a friend of the poet's father, and Member of Parliament for the Shire. These may be regarded as internal evidences against the story of the deer-stealing; and the following is a lawyer's *résumé* of the external defects of the evidence :—

“In the first place, though Sir Thomas Lucy had noble and extensive grounds, he had no deer park, and no deer. In the next place, if it is necessary to say more, the only punishment which could be imposed under the statute then in force (the 5th of Elizabeth, cap. 21) for the suppression of deer-stealing, was *imprisonment for three months, and a fine payable to the party offended*. Whipping was out of the question, and there is not the slightest tradition or rumour that Shakespeare was ever imprisoned. Not one of his literary rivals, some of whom tried to pick flaws in him at first, ever twitted him with any such offence or its consequences. In the third place, Sir Thomas Lucy was High Sheriff of Warwickshire, and Shakespeare was the oldest son of a chief magistrate of Stratford, with whom it is more than probable the sheriff was on familiar terms; and it is therefore most *improbable* that the one would commit the offence, or the other prosecute it.” *

Though we disbelieve the legend, we do not doubt that Charlecote Park is a veritable Shakespearian locality, and as it forms one of the most pleasant excursions near Stratford—along the meadow-lands, on the east bank of the Avon—we advise a visit to it. A fine point of view occurs between Tiddington and Alcester, and a right of way through the park makes the journey more agreeable, as well as shorter.

* Biographical Introduction to Shakespeare's Works, by Henry Glassford Bell, Sheriff of Lancashire, p. 17.—*Author of "Poems and Romances."*

Its old Saxon name, *Ceorlcote*—the home of the husbandman—carries us back to years before the conquest. The present house was built in 1558 by Thomas Lucy, who in 1593 was knighted by Queen Elizabeth. It stands at a short distance from, and at some little elevation above the river Avon. The building forms three sides of a quadrangle, the fourth being occupied by a handsome central gate-house, some distance in advance of the main building. The octangular turrets on each side, and the oriel window over the gate, are peculiar and pleasing features. The house retains its gables and angular towers, but has suffered from the large and heavy sash-windows of the times of William III. or George I.

Much the same as it was in the days of Shakespeare is now the exterior aspect of the house, with its stone-casemated

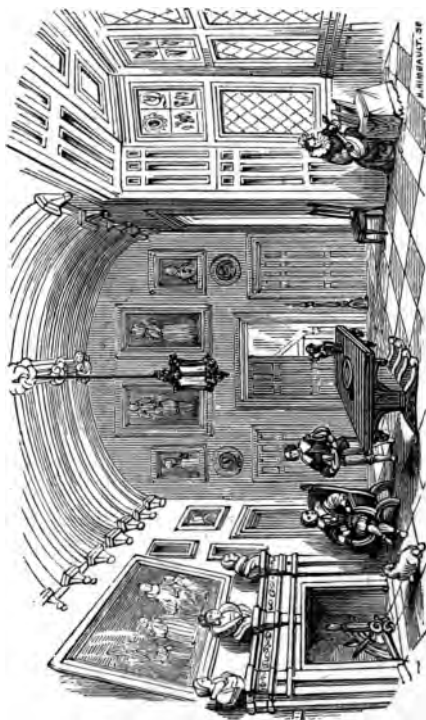


Entrance Gateway.

windows, and its octagon towers at each corner, crowned with their vanes ; and inside, the old hall still remains, with its wide

ce and deep bay-window, blazoned with armorial bearings, which the memorable *lucres* are conspicuous.

assing through the old gate, we enter the court-yard, which, e of the old fountain and circular tank of water, is now



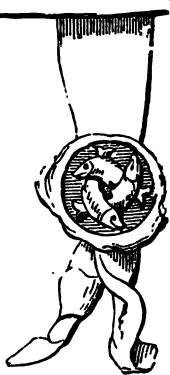
Interior of the Hall at Charlecote.

it in flower-beds. The hall is entered by a porch, having nily arms and crest at each angle. We give a view of the r as it is now. On the large Gothic bow-window we see, *zoned on stained glass*, the armorial bearings of the *Lucy*

family for many generations. We see, in the quarterings the three white *lucres*—from the old French *lus*, or the Latin *lucius*, and meaning the pike. The seal of Sir Thomas Lucy, here engraved, exhibits the three white *lucres* interlaced. The autograph is written in a bold hand. The engraving is in size, one half of the original. On the vanes of the house at Charlecote the three *lucres* interlaced are also displayed between cross-crosslets. From time immemorial heralds had made a pun in execrable taste upon the name of Lucy and the *luce*, and Shakespeare only ridicules the low wit of these repeaters of stale jests, which are *luce a non lucendo*; and as Nym, in the play, would say—"there's the humour of it." We do not think for a moment that the son of the Stratford magistrate could not form as good a resolution as the rascally Nym, and he declares "I will keep the haviour of reputation."

Thomas

Lucy



The following description of the mansion, and the associations it can raise in the spirit of a sympathetic spectator, seem worthy of a quotation:—

"There stands, with slight alterations, and those in good taste, the old mansion as it was reared in the days of Elizabeth. A broad avenue leads to its great gateway, which opens into the court and the principal entrance. We would desire to people that hall with kindly inmates, to imagine the fine old knight, perhaps a little too puritanical, indeed, in his latter days, living there in peace and happiness with his family; merry as he ought to have been with his first wife, Jocosa (whose English name,

Joyce, soundeth not quite so pleasant), whose epitaph, by her husband, is honourable alike to the deceased and to the survivor. We can picture him planting the second avenue, which leads obliquely across the park from the great gateway to the porch of the parish church. It is an avenue too narrow for carriages, if carriages had then been common ; and the knight and his lady walk in stately guise along that grassy pathway, as the Sunday bells summon them to meet their humble neighbours



Charlecote old Church.

in a place where all are equal. Charlecote is full of rich woodland scenery. The lime-tree avenue may, perhaps, be of a later date than the age of Elizabeth ; and one elm has evidently succeeded another century after century. But there are old gnarled oaks and beeches dotted about the park. Its little knolls and valleys are the same as they were two centuries ago.

The same Avon flows beneath the gentle elevation on which the house stands, sparkling in the sunshine as brightly as when that house was first built. There may we still lie

"Under an oak, whose antique roots peep out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood."

and doubt not that there was the place to which

"A poor sequester'd stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish."

There we may still see

"A careless herd,
Full of the pasture,"

leaping gaily along, or crossing the river at their own will in search of fresh fields and low branches whereon to browse. The village of Charlecote is now one of the prettiest of objects. Whatever is new about it—and most of the cottages are new—looks like a restoration of what was old. The same character prevails in the neighbouring village of Hampton Lucy; and it may not be too much to assume that the memory of him who walked in these pleasant places in his younger days, long before the sound of his greatness had gone forth to the ends of the earth, has led to the desire to preserve here something of the architectural character of the age in which he lived." *

It appears but just that some reparation to the memory of Sir Thomas Lucy should be made for dragging his name through centuries of tradition, as a persecutor of Shakespeare, and this we shall give in the words of the late F. W. Fairholt:—

"Sir Thomas appears to have been an exemplary country gentleman. He died August 18th, 1600, and is buried in Charlecote Church, a short distance from the family seat. His effigy, and that of his wife, are sculptured there. They are

* Charles Knight's Shakespeare: a Biography.

executed in a masterly manner, and may be considered as careful portraits. The cut here engraved is a careful copy of a finer head than any Justice Shallow could show. That Sir



Thomas had an equally fine heart, the epitaph on the black slab in the recess at the back of the tomb will shew. With singular good taste his name is not mentioned ; but his wife's virtues are recorded in the following touching and beautiful inscription :—"

HERE ENTOMBED LYETH THE LADY JOYCE LUCY, WIFE OF SIR THOMAS LUCY, OF CHERLECOTE, IN THE COUNTY OF WARWICK, BORN THE TWENTY-NIGHT, DAUGHTER AND HEIR OF THOMAS ACTON, OF SUTTON, IN THE COUNTY OF WORCESTER, ESQUIER, WHO DEPARTED OUT OF THIS WRETCHED WORLD TO HER HEAVENLY KINGDOME THE TENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD GOD 1595, OF HER AGE LX. AND THREE. ALL THE TIME OF HER LIFE A TRUE AND FAITHFULL SERVANT OF HER GOOD GOD, NEVER DETECTED OF ANY CRIME OF VICE ; IN RELIGION MOST SOUND ; IN LOVE TO HER HUSBAND MOST FAITHFUL AND TRUE ; IN FRIENDSHIP MOST CONSTANT ; TO WHAT WAS IN TRUST COM-

MITTED TO HER MOST SECRET ; IN WISDOME EXCELLING ; IN GOVERNING OF HER HOUSE, AND BRINGING UP OF YOUTH IN THE FEARE OF GOD THAT DID CONVERSE WITH HER, MOST RARE AND SINGULAR. A GREAT MAINTAINER OF HOSPITALITY ; GREATLY ESTEEMED OF HER BETTERS ; MISLIKED OF NONE UNLESS OF THE ENVIOUS. WHEN ALL IS SPOKEN THAT CAN BE SAID, A WOMAN SO FURNISHED AND GARNISHED WITH VIRTUE, AS NOT TO BE BETTERED, AND HARDLY TO BE EQUALLED BY ANY. AS SHE LIVED MOST VIRTUOUSLY, SO SHE DYED MOST GODLY. SET DOWN BY HIM THAT BEST DID KNOW WHAT HATH BEEN WRITTEN TO BE TRUE.

THOMAS LUCY.



Tomb of Sir Thomas Lucy in Charlecote Church.

Respected be the memory of Sir Thomas ! A boyish *outbreak*, even if rebuked harshly in a moment of irritability

by him, was, we are sure, forgiven and forgotten by Shakespeare, whom we know to have been in friendly communication with the family afterwards. This we scarcely think would have been the case had Shakespeare threatened, like his own Falstaff—"An I have not ballads made on you, and sung to filthy tunes, let this cup of 'Sack be my poison'"—and fulfilled it.

CLOPTON HALL.

The house of New Place was once the property of the Cloptons, and much of the lands around Stratford was theirs. They had been munificent benefactors of the place, and we have only to look round Stratford Church to see that they were the great family of the district. Shakespeare's Welcombe property adjoined the lands of the Cloptons, and we may naturally suppose that he would take considerable interest in any of the events in that family, to which importance was attached by his friends and neighbours. About a mile from Stratford, in a fine upland, looking right down on Shottery, stands the stately old mansion in which this notable family dwelt; and here is a tradition in connection with it, which appears to have had a considerable effect in the dramatist's mind. In the time of the plague which beset Stratford, when Shakespeare was about two months old—Charlotte Clopton, a sweet-looking girl, with paly gold hair combed back from her forehead, and falling in wavy ringlets on her neck, and with eyes that "looked like violets filled with dew," had sickened, and to all appearance died. She was buried with fearful haste in the vaults of Clopton Chapel, attached to Stratford Church; but the sickness was not stayed. In a few days another of the Cloptons died, and him they bore to the ancestral vault; but as they descended the gloomy stairs, they saw by the torchlight Charlotte Clopton, in her grave clothes, leaning against the wall; and when they looked nearer, she was indeed dead, but

not before, in the agonies of despair and hunger, she had bitten a piece from her white round shoulder !

“ It is singular that such a capulet tomb should have actually been in the church of Stratford-upon-Avon,” and it is not improbable that the catastrophe in *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as several of the most striking passages in that drama, owed their suggestion to this story of the Clopton household. Those who look upon the picture of Charlotte Clopton, which is to be seen at Stratford, will scarcely doubt that the creative fancy of Shakespeare acquired a fair suggestion from the canvas and the legend.

The visitor to Stratford who desires to extend his rural rambles in the neighbourhood, and to carry with him an abiding sense of the *genius loci*, may, taking advantage of an incident in the traditional history of the poet, find some pleasant strolls brought into association with the mightiest dramatist of all times, through “ the Legend of the Crab Tree,” related and believed among the Stratfordians of old time even until now. It is to the effect that in “ the golden days of good Queen Bess,” when drinking festivities held a frequent and popular place among the holiday amusements of the villagers, a company of the doughty ale-topers of Stratford—with William Shakespeare in his youth among them—set out early one Whit-Monday morning to test the comparative ale-imbibing capacities of their neighbours of Bideford—a hamlet then not less illustrious for the production of “ nut-brown October ” than for the bibulous powers of its “ sippers ” and “ topers.” That morning the Bideford “ topers ”—who affected the championship of England—as quaffers of “ potations pottle-deep ” had gone over to Evesham fair for a similar purpose, and only the “ sippers ” were at hand to take up the challenge. To the Falcon Inn, *in friendly rivalry*, the heroes of Bideford and the volunteers of

Stratford adjourned to test their prowess by their cups. Stratford, speedily foiled, beat a retreat, anxious to get home while they had yet some small remnant of skill left to guide themselves straight along. Their aim overtasked them, quite overtaken they were compelled, within a little mile from the Falcon, to bivouac, under a road-side crab tree. On awaking next morning, brain-racked, some of the party propose to go "to 't again;" but Shakespeare—perhaps foreseeing a second and more ignominious defeat—declared he had had enough of it, having already been overcome in prior contests by

"Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
 Haunted Hillborough, hungry Grafton,
 Dodging Exhall, papist Wixford,
 Beggarly Broom and drunken Bideford."

The crab tree of the legend kept its place till 4th Dec., 1824, when, having altogether fallen into decay, and became

"A rotten tree
 That cannot so much as one blossom yield,"

was removed to Bideford Grange.

As these doggerel lines *have* got woven into the record of Shakespeare's life, it is not amiss to enjoy the beautiful scenery to be met with in going to them. Is there any slender reference to this or some similar exploit with the famous ale of Bideford, in the sentence of resolve—"Tis no matter, i'll never be drunk whilst I live again, but in honest, civil, godly company, for this trick—if I be drunk i'll be drunk with those that have the fear of God and not with drunken knaves."

"Piping Pebworth" is a pretty little village of about two hundred cottages, situated on a gentle ascent, with hedge-rowed fields lying round it, as we gain the ascent from Dorsington Lane. The cottages here are either thatched or covered with stone slate from Gloucester; they have mostly trim gardens, and the farmsteadings near it shew signs of well-to-do-ishness in their full

rick-yards and their richly cultivated fields. St. Peter's Church is a gothic structure of humble pretensions, which has an antique chapel on its south side, separated from the body of the church by four gothic arches, supported by octagonal pillars. This is plainly a part of a more ancient edifice than the church.

"Dancing Marston" is situated in Kiftsgate 'hundred, in Gloucester, about four miles south-west of Stratford-upon-Avon. On a level plain, between two streams, it stands as if built on an island of which the chief architectural item is a rough-cast, bell-towered church, which seems pre-Norman in its structure, and has around it carved gravestones which bear dates of the eleventh century. The merry appellation given to it in the traditionary rhyme was, until within the last quarter of a century, maintained by its Morris-dancers who used to frequent the wakes and fairs in the neighbourhood, and who so recently as the Shakespeare Jubilee in 1830, appeared at Stratford, accompanied by a "motley fool," to the great delight of their fellow holiday-makers.

"Haunted Hillborough" is the name of a fair stone manor house, embowered among lofty elms, not far from the willowy banks of the Avon. It appears to have the very odour of the poet's golden time upon it still, and on its sombre solitude no intrusive highway, and scarcely even a bye-way affords means of inroad. It dates back to the days "when good King Stephen ruled this land," and the monks of Bordesley caught their Friday's fish in the silvery stretches of the Avon, which passed through their own ten acres of meadow land. Its seclusion and its romantic position mark it out as a fit place for the popular fancy of the times, to raise a mysterious story about, and what story would be perfect in the olden days without a *ghost-haunted hall* or garden?

"Hungry Grafton" is said to have belonged to the Knights Templar, and is on that account sometimes called Temple Grafton. It rests on a blue lias foundation, and the inhabitants work the quarries and burn the stone into lime, hence "the hateful reek of lime-kilns much abounds in the vicinity." About four hundred people live in the parish, in which there is a small cruciform church, dedicated to St. Andrew. The houses are neat and clean, but there is little of interest or beauty to tempt the footsteps along the rough uneven ways which lead through its thousand and thirty acres.

"Dodging Exhall" is about two miles further to the westward from Grafton over a steep hill-ridge, and contains only a few straggling, humble cottages, and a church of the time of Henry I., dedicated to St. Giles. The tower is of wood, and the porch and walls are messed and ivied as a sign of old.

Popish or "Papist Wixford" is a mile onwards from Exhall, two from Alcester, and seven from Stratford. The lands of the parish belonged to the priory of Alcester, and the monks of Evesham and the canons of Kenilworth were bound to cause mass to be said in the chapel of St. John, a chapel which is larger than the church of St. Milburgh, on the south side of which it is placed. It is now under the superiority of the old Roman Catholic family of the Throckmortons, and a considerable number of the inhabitants still adhere to the old faith.

"Drunken Bideford," still celebrated for its ale, and the chimes from the old gray tower of the church, not unfrequently falls on the ear of the customers of the White Lion while partaking of refreshment from a jolly jug of nut-brown ale. The old "Falcon," once a fine-looking country inn, a large stone building, in the style of the early Tudors, with lofty gables and stone shafted windows, having an enclosed court-yard, and a gallery on three sides, giving access to the upper rooms, is now—since

the times have changed—a Poor-house ! Bideford was a market town of some note in former times ; and “Beggary Broom,” which in olden times belonged to Evesham Abbey, is now a hamlet attached to the parish of Bideford. The merry mill-wheel is turned here by the Arrow, a tributary of the Avon, which it meets at Salford Priors. The inhabitants of Broom are few, and the houses do not much belie the rhyme of the former time, but seem “forlorn and beggarly.” In the same hundred of Barlichway, which contains both Bideford and Stratford-upon-Avon, is Barton-on-the-Heath, the birthplace of “Christopher Sly—old Sly’s son of Barton-Heath—by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker,” who owed fourteen pence on the score to Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincote—a village which lies but a short way off from “Dancing Marston.”

Nor should we fail to counsel a long stroll by “Avon’s virgin Stream,” passing from Stratford upwards.

“For the first mile or so, the trees which line the banks are chiefly old willow pollards, with stiff rough stems and huge bunchy heads. Shrubs of various kinds, chiefly, however, the bramble and the woody nightshade, have struck root atop into their decayed trunks, as if these formed so many tall flower-pots ; and we may catch, in consequence, the unwonted glitter of glossy black and silver berries from amid the silvery leaves. The scenery improves as we ascend the stream. The willow pollards give place to forest trees, carelessly grouped, that preserve, unlopped and un mutilated, their proper proportions. But the main features of the landscape remain what they were. A placid stream, broadly befringed with sedges, winds in tortuous reaches through rich meadows ; and now it sparkles in open sunlight, for the trees recede ; and anon it steals away, scarce seen, amid the gloom of bosky thickets. And such is the Avon—Shake-

speare's own river ; here must he have wandered in his boyhood times unnumbered. That stream, with its sedges and its quick glancing fins—those dewy banks, with their cowslips and daffodils—trees, chance grouped, exactly such as these, and to which these have succeeded—must all have stamped their deep impress on his mind ; and, when an unsettled adventurer in London, they must have risen before him in all their sunshiny peacefulness, to inspire feelings of sadness and regret ; and when, in after days, he had found his true vocation, their loved forms and colours must have mingled with the tissue of his poetry. And here must he have walked in sober middle life, when fame and fortune had both been achieved, happily to feel amid the solitude that there is but little of solid good in either, and that, even were it otherwise, the stream of life glides away to its silent bourne, from their gay light and their kindly shelter, to return no more for ever.” *

Our task is now done. We have lead the reader through the genius-enchanted country side in which “The Home of Shakespeare” was placed ; we have illustrated some of the scenes and things which have a peculiar Shakespearian interest ; we have endeavoured to keep our thoughts in harmony with the mind and the times of that illustrious dramatist, who has replenished our literature with so much vigorous life, and enlarged our very conception of the powers of man. If the writer has erred in adventuring the task, here as he stays his foot at Stratford-on-Avon, with all the memoirs of Shakespeare crowding in his thoughts, he can only crave grace for his presumptuousness, and place before the reader Shakespeare's own request, “Let your indulgence set me free.”

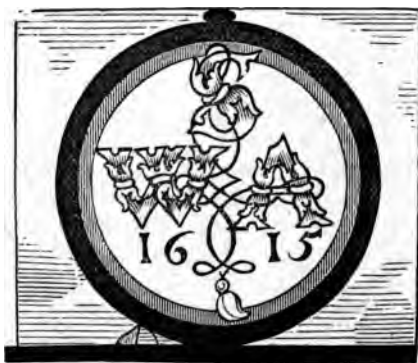
* Hugh Miller's *First Impressions of England*, p. 180.



Remains of the Font in which Shakespeare was Christened.



Remains of Shakespeare's House, New Place.

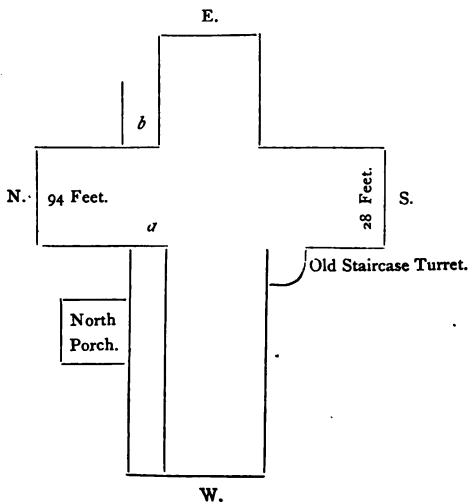


Square of Glass taken from New Place.

AN
 ARCHITECTURAL ACCOUNT
 OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH
 OF THE
 HOLY TRINITY,
Stratford-upon-Avon,
 BY THE REV. E. H. KNOWLES.

FIRST AGE.

EARLY in the 13th Century—for no evidence of stonework (as it seems) of written record carries us further back—the church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-on-Avon, was a fine cruciform building, with one aisle (north) and a north porch, of



which one buttress remains. Let us make a note of what yet survives from this period.

The tower which, as the coinstones* shew, was (not reckoning the spire) about as high as it now is, and of three stories, still retains its Normaneseque panel-arches, with their Early English lights (A.D. 1200), and the early windows in the roof spandrils below. The eastern weather-moulding remains, and inside the staircase turret are fragments of the south nave wall, with some† other stones of the same age. The tower piers are cased over, as we shall see below.

There seems to have been no‡ south aisle at this time. That to the north opened into the transept by a well-proportioned arch at (a), and a similar arch at (b) led probably into a north chancel aisle; but a change was made in the 15th century; and the chapter house stood somewhere here, which seems in its ruinous old age to have been used as a charnel house, and was destroyed in 1800.

The transepts were lighted by two windows on each side, and had altars in their east walls under Segmental arches. They have high eave roofs, which were probably altered in 1589 (see stone over south window—Wheler's History), and were restored not very judiciously a few years ago.

SECOND AGE.

This Early English Church, which took a considerable time to complete, was much altered about the end of the 13th century.

* Some local archæologist might probably discover from what quarries the two kinds of stone came, that are here used; the older has an iron-stone tint, and was given up for a better material, even in the early days of the chantry of Stratford. The plan given is not drawn to scale.

† Some are of great beauty.

‡ If there was one, it was closed at the east end with a Chapel; but the position of the staircase turret is rather a proof that there was not one, as it would otherwise have been placed at an unoccupied angle, as at S. Bees Priory Church, &c.

1. The piers of the tower were rebuilt or cased. (The present groined roof is modern.) Its arches were remodelled. Its upper storey was almost wholly rebuilt. There were added a corbel table, and Decorated battlements with (most probably) a wooden spire (replaced by the present spire in 1764).

Note the* traces of the early buttress now inside at the N.W. angle of the tower. And the discharging arches in the upper storey, providing for a spire.

Some of these changes were made shortly after the foundation of the chantry here, by the famous John de Stratford, in 1332.

To the same eminent man, before and after his elevation to the see of Canterbury, we may ascribe all other improvements of this age, or the gifts from which they were made.

2. The south aisle of the Church is his work, with its Chapel of St. Thomas à Becket (the beautiful sidilia of which still exist† in the churchyard), about 1320. About the same time the north aisle was widened.

As the tower was found to require fresh‡ buttressing, the entrance of the N. aisle was blocked up, and made into the Chapel of the Blessed Virgin. Its present screen is of latish 15th century work.

In the north aisle is a very fine "honeycomb" window (Early Decorated), which, with the tower arches, may be compared to work at Bunbury in Cheshire. The west window in this aisle is also early, and so is a plain door in the south aisle.

* Of the circular windows in the tower, though they all are early 14th Century, the eastern one seems a little the latest, as the archivolt or rim-moulding of the others becomes here a hood-moulding. The pinnacles may be more modern.

† Only as moss-grown fragments, alas! though they are the best wrought pieces I suppose, within 10 miles.

‡ The low transept walls may have proved insufficient.

3. The capitals, arches, and hood mouldings of the nave are pure Early Decorated ; but the angular soffit is a defect in them, as it is deficient in gravity.

The staircase turret* is of this age, probably replacing an Early English one not far off, and outside the original Church.

The rest of the aisle work shews many changes, and its completion at the S.W. corner is advanced Decorated (close of 14th century). Some of the windows are of very doubtful character.

This improved Church only differed as to its ground plan from the present in having a smaller (Early English) chancel, and no north porch, as the Early English one had been absorbed in the widened aisle.†

THIRD AGE.

Henry 5th gave to the priests of this chantry a new charter and some additional privileges, and it became a college, and the Church a collegiate one, in or before 1423.

Somewhere in the reign of Edward IV., the Warden, Thomas Balshall, pulled down the ancient chancel, and built the present choir, on a much larger scale (part of the exterior walling of the transepts is, I think, visible inside).

The work here shows two distinct styles.

* Some beautiful fragments of older work may be seen inside.

† Many benefactions are recorded as having been made by towns-folk and priests to this foundation in the 14th Century. Many houses, shops, and 'tofts,' or house-sites, and carucates or plough-land, (? 50 acres), were given. Notice the differences in the jamb-stones of the aisle windows ; the easternmost window of the south aisle is earlier than others and its jamb-stones are smaller.

One Master Mason works in the local style, not unskilled in "historiation," and keeping to older models. It is he that carved the Piscina, Founder's tomb (Thomas Balshall died 1491) north and south doors, and probably the font, the bowl of which is in the south transept.

The other is more excentric, more original, more self-conscious ; he aims at novelty, and is at the pains to enlarge the resources of his bestiary in the lower worlds of air and water ; he perches a paunchy toad on a buttress, or catches a dragon-fly from the river ; and as he struggles on a thorn, he holds him up to the admiration of the townsfolk, half insect, half demon, for ever.

Even his angels, who support the priests in their seats, ruffle their wings in a whimsical mood.

Our neighbours at Coventry were now building their churches on a princely scale ; and Thomas Balshall's successor, Ralph Colingwode, seems to have gone to work on the nave in the closing years of the 15th century.

A north porch was added, and the nave thoroughly remodelled. The low decorated clerestory was removed, the walls pulled down to the crowns of the arches, rude angels (by some 'prentice hand) were *inserted* to carry the pillasters, and the wall was panelled with large lantern windows, and a flattish roof.

As it now stands, with the pretty accessories of its site and avenue, this fine Church would of itself amply deserve a visit both from the archæologist and the artist. Without magnificence of scale, or extreme beauty of detail,* it has great dignity, both inside and outside.

* Except some of the fragments.

Its chancel indeed is very noble, as worthy a burial-place for the Great Poet as could well be found.

We must add that this fine fabric sadly needs repair, the tower especially being in a dangerous state ; the stone spire of 1764 having increased the mischief.



